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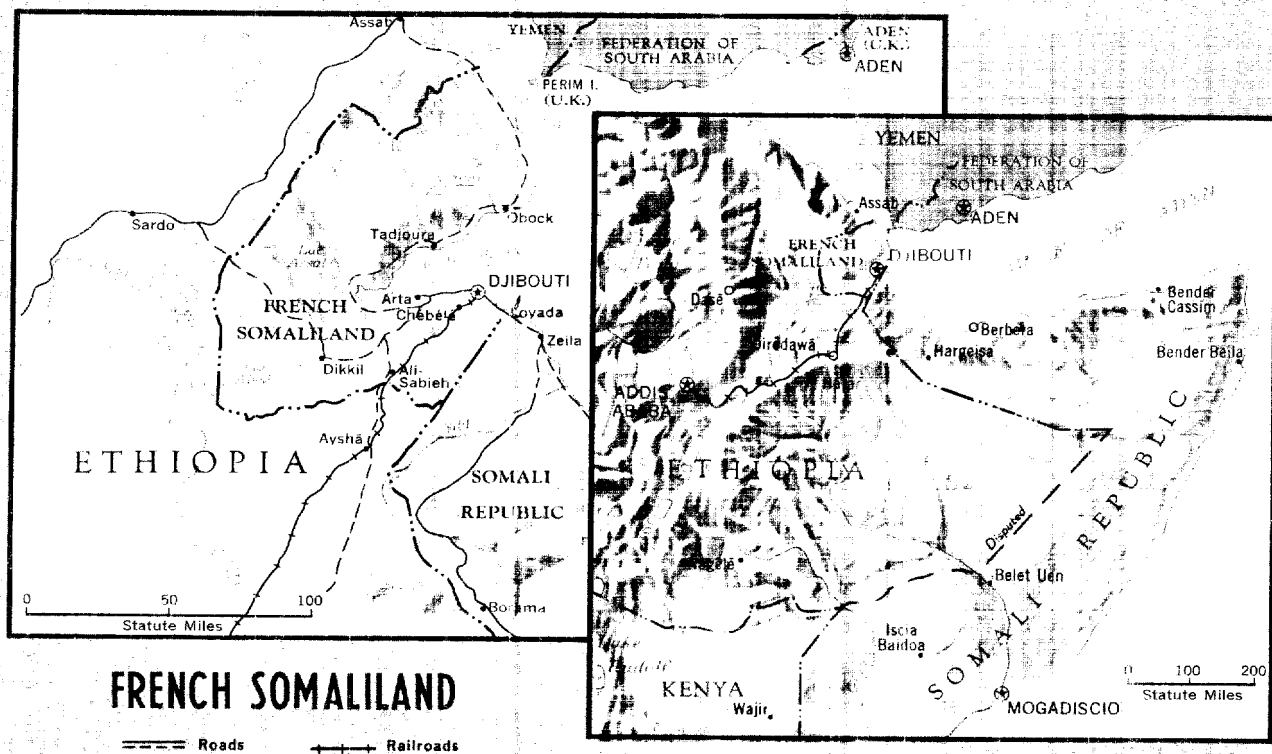
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1. FRENCH SOMALILAND

Tensions both within and outside French Somaliland are rising as the 19 March referendum on continued association with France approaches. The chances for a vote favorable to France recently have been endangered by a split among the traditionally pro-French Afar population.

The Afar and Somali communities are poles apart, and if the referendum results in a vote for independence, there will be serious difficulties in organizing a workable government. If the vote favors continued association with France, serious unrest seems likely to develop among the Somali inhabitants, prodded by Mogadiscio.

A military confrontation between Ethiopia and the Somali Republic might follow a vote for independence. Haile Selassie wants the French to remain because he fears that an independent French Somaliland could lead to Somalia's control over Djibouti, Ethiopia's principal outlet to the sea (see map). The Emperor, declaring French Somaliland an integral part of Ethiopia, has hinted at military action to secure Djibouti.

The Somali Government, which wants to incorporate all ethnic Somalis within its borders, is pushing for an independence vote and presently is regrouping its Soviet-equipped armed forces in the event an Ethiopian move against Djibouti becomes likely. Somali ground and air forces are being strengthened in northern Somalia and along the French Somaliland border.

There has been no Ethiopian military response to these moves as yet, but Addis Ababa is currently seeking to modernize its forces and has recently approached the US, Great Britain, Israel, and France asking for modern arms. On 27 February Haile Selassie goes to Moscow, where he will probably try to persuade the Soviets to water down their military assistance to the Somali Republic. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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2. GUATEMALA

The rash of terrorism in Guatemala City last week was apparently designed to ease the pressure on rural guerrillas who have suffered losses from recent government air strikes.

A popular air force officer was assassinated on 16 February, and two days later a gun fight between guerrillas and government forces caused the death of at least four persons, possibly including one guerrilla.

The killings have been carried out by a special Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) team, which was sent into the capital from the northeast because the Communist Party and its urban terrorist units have not been active enough to suit the FAR.

The military's reaction to the assassination of the air force officer was one of barely restrained anger. There have been bitter and emotional demands for action against San Carlos University, which terrorists use as a haven.

In an effort to mollify the military, the government dismissed the ineffectual chiefs of the judicial and national police on 16 February. Estuardo Garcia Gomez, the new judicial police chief, has been closely involved with the ruling Revolutionary Party since 1958. However, there are reports that he has had long-time connections with the Communist Party and its guerrilla and terrorist groups. If the reports are true, Garcia Gomez may prove to be something of a liability in this assignment.

In any event the appointments seem unlikely to prevent further terrorism and it is probable that the army, which is not responsible for policing the capital, will have to increase its activity in Guatemala City. The increased effort both in the field against the guerrillas and in the capital against terrorists may spread the armed forces too thin for effective action in either area. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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